



ELIZABETH McDOUGALL

PIONEER

By EDNA KELLS

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BY EDNA KELLS

EARLY in the nineteenth century, when Queen Victoria was still a babe, a Quaker child was born in the sunny county of Surrey, England. As she grew to girlhood her life was moulded by the simple Quaker faith with its clear-cut ideas of right and wrong. But even while her baby lips were learning to lisp the gentle "Thee's" and "Thou's" of the Quaker folk, it was written in the Book of Fate that she would spend the greater part of her life in a distant country surrounded by Indians; that she would know sacrifice and hardship; sorrow and tragedy; loneliness and long anxious waiting—and often sore grief at the end. It was written that savages would come to her door and even steal into her bedchamber; and that long after her hair silvered, she would be carried to her last resting place by six stalwart Indian chiefs, representatives of a race that had learned to love her dearly.

It was further written that, through the long years, the faith that sustained her

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people for many generations would comfort and protect her; that safety would attend her always; that she would radiate peace and bring joy to lonely hearts; and that she would go unscathed through storms and floods, wars and epidemics that swept others into eternity.

In the annals of Western Canada, largely unwritten, this child is better known as Mrs. George M. McDougall, wife of the Rev. George M. McDougall, pioneer Methodist missionary of the North West Territories, who before her marriage was Elizabeth Chantler, daughter of an old and wealthy English Quaker family.

* * * * *

"Elizabeth! Elizabeth! Wilt thee put thy bonnet on? It is time to go to the meeting house."

One can easily imagine the little Elizabeth loitering in the sunny English garden watching the butterflies with calm grey eyes, listening to the birds with ears attuned to harmony, while the elder members of the Chantler family prepared unhurriedly to go to meeting. There was no lying in bed until the last moment in that home; no hasty

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swallowing of breakfast, no racing at break-neck speed to morning service. An atmosphere of peace permeated the home and the garden where doubtless roses bloomed and a sun-dial told the hours of the day; and where plum and cherry trees showered white petals over Elizabeth in the springtime.

Forty-five years later Elizabeth and her husband often worked in their garden at Victoria on the banks of the Saskatchewan River, while their fair-haired children played as happily on the open prairie as she had played in the quiet Surrey garden. And not far away—unseen by all—Blackfoot Indians poised tensely, bow strung or finger on trigger, ready to shoot the workers and then steal the children. But an Unseen Power guarded them. And the gardeners continued to dig and hoe and plant substantial things such as turnips, potatoes and barley, for the winters were long and one must live off the land, if at all, in that vast new country.

* * * * *

Elizabeth Chantler was educated in a Quaker college in England. While a young girl she came with her parents to Muddy York (Toronto). Her father built the first

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flour mill in that settlement. Later he moved to the Meaford district where he had lands and orchards.

While the family lived in the Meaford district, Elizabeth went to keep house for a brother who was running a grist mill at Tollendale, not far from Barrie. There she met George M. McDougall whose name was later to take a prominent place among the nation builders of Canada and in the annals of the Methodist Church. The meeting took place at a revival, and when later they became engaged, they discovered that from the moment the young man entered the room where Elizabeth was seated, the attraction had been mutual.

Elizabeth joined the Wesleyan Methodists, the denomination her husband had chosen though his parents were Scottish Presbyterians. The elder McDougall was a sailor in the British navy, and the family came to Canada from Dundee and settled in Kingston, then a naval depot. There George was born. When he was a young boy the family moved to a bush farm near Penetanguishene Road, in the Georgian Bay district, and, while clearing the land and living the pioneer life, he became expert in woodcraft and in

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handling gun, canoe and snowshoes, arts that served him well in later years.

The young couple were married, in 1842, and settled in Owen Sound where they lived for six years. Mr. McDougall operated trading vessels on the Georgian Bay and Lake Superior, and was away from home a great deal, so that as a bride, Mrs. McDougall had her first lessons in self-reliance. Her husband had been licensed to preach locally, and thus his missionary work commenced. But he realized he was handicapped by lack of special training, so after much planning at the close of 1848, he and his wife left for Cobourg, Ontario, in order that he might attend college. Here came the first great parting; the children had to be left behind with friends.

Their Cobourg residence was short, but in a sense gave Mrs. McDougall a rest and change. After studying for a term Mr. McDougall was sent to Alderville to take the position of preacher and assistant superintendent of the boys' industrial school, a post he occupied until the summer of 1851 when he was sent to Garden River some ten miles from Sault Ste. Marie.

There was much rum running in that part

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of the country and the Indians and whites alike were demoralized by drink. When the McDougalls arrived the entire population, with the exception of three men, was drunk—a discouraging outlook.

The missionary was appointed by the government to see that cargoes of liquor brought across the border by American bootleggers were confiscated and destroyed. The task was not entrusted to others; he carried it out himself, and his head bore many scars from broken bottles, for the bootleggers were as unscrupulous and resentful then as now.

Those were anxious days for the young wife for she never knew when the law-breakers would wreak greater vengeance on her husband, or when the Indians would descend upon the mission intent on massacre. However, drunkenness decreased steadily under Mr. McDougall's teaching, and, "as a proof of this," he reported to headquarters, "my family have not been alarmed by hearing the wild war cry for the last two months!"

Six years were spent at Garden River, then the family moved to Rama, in Ontario, an old mission, badly run down, where they stayed for three years. But the West was

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calling for missionaries and in June, 1860, Mr. McDougall was appointed to take charge of Rossville mission at Norway House on Lake Winnipeg, and made chairman of the Methodist missions of that territory lying between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains. There they lived for three years, and there Mrs. McDougall and the younger children remained when in 1862 Mr. McDougall and his eldest son, John (later the Rev. Dr. John McDougall), travelled still farther toward the setting sun, on a tour of inspection. The family consisted of John, now considered a man; David and Eliza Victoria who had been left in school in Ontario; Georgiana, little Elizabeth (Libbie), Nellie, Flora and George. George was born at the Rossville mission. An infant son, Moses, died in Ontario.

After travelling as far west as the Rockies, Mr. McDougall chose sites for two missions, one at Fort Edmonton, and one at Victoria on the Saskatchewan River about eighty-five miles east of the Fort. Mr. Wolseley, an Englishman, bachelor, and Wesleyan Methodist minister, and John McDougall, were left in charge of the Victoria mission site—

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for that was all it was—when Mr. McDougall returned to Rossville mission for his family. They were to build a small house after he left, but did not do so. When the family arrived in 1863 there was no house to shelter them so they lived in skin tepees until logs could be secured and a dwelling erected.

The trip had been long and tiresome. From Rossville mission they travelled in York boats across Lake Winnipeg to the south branch of the Saskatchewan River, then up the Saskatchewan to Victoria. At Grand Rapids they encountered the first prairie natives—Indians naked except for their breechcloths, fine-looking men who though doubtless surprised, showed no hostility. Still they gave Mrs. McDougall an idea of the type of people among whom she was going to live, and she might have been excused had she hugged her baby son a little closer, and regarded the future with trepidation.

Living in tepees with five young children, to say nothing of Mr. McDougall and John, was no simple task, but Mrs. McDougall never complained of the difficulties. There were no logs around Victoria, so the men had

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to go to the woods some distance away, and cut the lumber for the temporary dwelling, a crude one-roomed cabin. The actual mission house and church were built the following year but not without delay. The men cut the logs in the woods and sawed the lumber with whipsaws, then left it to dry. The Blackfeet in destructive mood burned this lumber and the work had to be redone. However, when the mission house was completed, Mrs. McDougall had a pretentious residence containing eight rooms—living-room, dining-room, bedroom and kitchen on the ground floor, and four bedrooms above.

Furniture was made by hand. This task fell to the lot of one Larsen, a Norwegian carpenter whom Mr. McDougall had brought from the Rossville mission. Making furniture from the tree to the finished article was a tedious task, and the product crude at best, and sometimes awkward in appearance.

An open fireplace heated the house after a fashion and served for cooking purposes as well. Glass windows let in the light. These windows were a great novelty to the Indians. They would stand outside and holding their robes up to the level of their eyes, peer over them into the house, often shutting out the

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light from the rooms within. They appreciated the comfort of the house also, and would squat on the floor for hours, smoking vile smelling weeds. Even this evoked no harsh words, but sometimes Mrs. McDougall resorted to a scheme she had found effective. She would put on a huge fire and roast them out!

Before the mission house was finished, Mr. McDougall left to bring supplies from Fort Garry where he hoped to meet David and Eliza, coming from school in Ontario to join their parents.

There had been much illness among the Indians that winter, and Mrs. McDougall and others of the mission household were wearied with the nursing, and with the strain of living among such excitable people, for the Indians were ready to go to war on the slightest provocation. Young Indians stole horses from other tribes, blood was shed, and war precipitated. Warriors came home triumphantly bearing scalps they had taken, tied on peeled poles which they held aloft while riding, and singing war songs; but they also brought news of tribal losses and this caused lamentation in the camps. The occupants of the mission were con-

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stantly worried by the Indians dancing scalp dances around the lonely little community where the only white woman on the Saskatchewan River spent her days with her small family and perhaps one manservant. Often, indeed, she and the children were quite alone.

Of living conditions at the mission in those days, Dr. John McDougall has written in *Pathfinding on Plain and Prairie*. "Coming to the mission we found everybody busy at the necessary work of preparing for the winter. . . . The usual excitement over the coming and going of war parties had taken place. Mother and sisters had spent days and nights in a sort of semi-terror because of the wild conduct of these people which even Maskepetoon's strong influence could not wholly control, though doubtless this grand old man's firm friendship for the white man and especially for those of our mission, was the main reason that no violence was attempted." Maskepetoon (Broken Arm), was the chief of the tribe.

Few can realize the isolation of that pioneer life. The McDougalls lived in a big world, without mails, telegrams or telephones to break the solitude, but life was not

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monotonous. The constant watchfulness against surprise and danger gave it zest which no doubt the chatelaine of the mission would gladly have dispensed with. Still she did not complain though she must have felt the isolation keenly, realizing as she did that no matter how dire the need, it would be almost impossible to reach her menfolk away on their long journeys, visiting Indian camps, hunting, freighting.

In her husband's absence, Mrs. McDougall was frequently called upon to act as peacemaker when the Indians became restless. In times of peace or stress she also held informal religious services. She did not preach, but talked to her congregation, with her daughter Georgiana acting as interpreter. Mrs. McDougall herself never learned to speak the Cree beyond a few words—enough to make the women understand her. The younger children picked it up easily and chattered in the Indian tongue as readily as in English.

Often in her efforts to pacify the unruly, and in her care of the sick, for from the first she ministered to the sick no matter what their ailments, Mrs. McDougall had to draw on her larder, none too well filled at best.

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On one occasion during her husband's absence, her son, John, arrived at the mission and found the family dining on wild ducks' eggs, with milk and water as a beverage. Tea and coffee and sugar had all been used, vegetables and bread were but a memory, but Mrs. McDougall was thankful for life and did not seem to mind the lack of even the simplest luxuries. One-dish dinners were common features of the life. The dish might be meat or fish, eggs or potatoes, without bread or vegetables, often without salt, more frequently still without tea or milk.

In his biography of the Rev. George M. McDougall, his son, Dr. John McDougall gives this simple description of the situation:

"Let us look into the missionary's house; let us visit himself and wife and growing family. We will be very welcome. Few and far between are the visits of those speaking the same tongue, and hailing from the same country as this missionary family. While everything about and in the house is made as neat and clean as possible, rude benches and rough home-made chairs, and very few of these, comprise the furniture.

"We are invited to take a meal with the family. We see the meat upon the table; grace is said, the meat is served, the tea is poured, but there is no milk or sugar. There is a little salt on the table. We look for the coming of the bread, but it comes not;

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we would enjoy a potato or a turnip even with this meat, but the meal is ended and they are not forthcoming. We are surprised, yet so common is such fare with these our hosts, they do not notice what is a surprise to us.

"Let us go in another day and this time we see something upon the table we never saw before. 'Will you take some pemmican?' we are asked. We look in vain for anything else and perforce, because of necessity, we take some of this queer stuff which we are told is pemmican. We cannot say we relished it very much at first, but we will, no doubt, if we stay long enough; for our friends and their children seem to eat it with a hearty good will. We go in another day and we gather with the family around the board, and to our great astonishment a great big dish filled with boiled eggs is put upon the table. 'I am sorry we have not anything else,' is the humble apology of our hostess. We eat eggs and eggs until we have enough.

"We come along another time and having travelled far are hungry. As before we are welcomed to this hospitable board. A big plate of potatoes is put before us and some milk is poured out beside us. Again we are told, 'We are sorry there is nothing else in the house.' Yet another time we reach this pioneer home and a big dish of boiled fish is put upon the table and we are asked to make our meal of fish—sometimes with salt, sometimes without it. Such was the constant and ever-recurring experience of the people who lived in this land in those days.

"Did the patient mother ever utter a word of

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complaint? No. We have already said father was never given to whining, and as like begets like, there is very little complaint among the children. Sometimes there is very little of anything and sometimes dire hunger makes the little ones cry out. . . ."

It was a simple life, but one which sometimes palled on the head of the home. This discontent is apparent in a simple paragraph which Mr. McDougall wrote in August, 1869. The paragraph also reveals the keynote of his wife's philosophy.

"For years pemmican has been a staple dish on our table, yet I must confess I have very little relish for tallow and pounded meat. My wife says that it is better not to think of bread while we cannot have it as the thought might cause impatience. I shall not controvert her opinion, but judging from my feelings at this minute, the sight of a four-pound loaf would produce in my poor heart the liveliest gratitude."

That was the drouth year in what is now Central Alberta. Seed sowed in anticipation of grain and vegetables to supplement the fare of meat, dried in the ground. For months the mission table boasted only flesh and fowl and there was no prospect of change for at least another year. To make sure of their meat supply, the hunters had to hasten to the buffalo country without delay. When they started for the plains with a view

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to averting famine, they realized they were leaving the family at the mission house to face what might be a greater calamity.

The Indians were on the warpath. The Crees had killed many Blackfeet and the latter in retaliation resolved to carry war into the Cree country. They sent word ahead that they had spotted the Hudson's Bay Company's posts on the Saskatchewan—particularly Victoria. This was the prospect Mrs. McDougall faced as she saw the hunters disappear across the prairie. But white men never questioned the ability of their women to carry on alone under any circumstance, and if she felt qualms of fear, they were kept in the background. Fortunately the Blackfeet did not carry out their threat, but that did not relieve the suspense.

Even under the most favorable circumstances supplies were frequently exhausted in the absence of the hunters. At such times the family at the mission house had to wait until Indians happened along with meat to sell—and sometimes they were long in coming. Venison, fish, and game provided variety at times, but when the men were away the prairie chicken might roam around the house without fear and wild ducks swim

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happily in the sloughs. No matter how great the need, Mrs. McDougall could not shoot.

After the first year a garden was made and some vegetables grown. Mr. McDougall later built an ice-house and root-house in the river bank, thus providing storage facilities.

For such things as the land did not provide, the McDougalls had at first to depend upon the Hudson's Bay Company's imports, and the Great Company did not care to bring in much food. Even at the forts there was no luxury. A Hudson's Bay factor got three bags of flour yearly; a clerk, one bag; and laborers in the fort were given a quart each at Christmas and at New Year's! One year Mrs. McDougall was able to secure a bag and a half of flour. It was a small amount to stretch over a year, but the homemaker did her best. For Sundays she baked little cakes, one for each member of the household and one for the plate! Similar cakes were also baked in the fort, but there was no extra cake for the plate on the factor's table.

While the family still lived at Victoria the Hudson's Bay Company decided it would no longer bring in food for the missions, so Mr. McDougall was compelled to organize

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his own brigade of carts to bring provisions from Fort Garry and even St. Paul. This necessitated long absences as a brigade leaving early in April would not get back to the mission until the summer. Two months at least were required for the trip under most favorable conditions.

Extending their agricultural operations at Victoria the McDougalls started to grow barley which was converted into meal. The process was primitive, and the milling was carried on under Mrs. McDougall's supervision. She herself moistened the barley and tied it up in new leather sacks. The Indian women placed these sacks on hollowed logs and hammered them until the hulls came off the grain. It was then dried and the children ground it in coffee mills. The coarse meal made excellent johnny cakes, and when dried Saskatoon berries were added as a substitute for currants the children considered the feast perfect. In the course of time a little sugar was obtainable. This came in the form of a pyramid of loaf sugar, which was carefully hoarded and used only on special occasions.

Mrs. McDougall found further vent for her resourcefulness in devising ways and

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means of conserving the wild fruits which grew so plentifully on the prairie. These were dried in the sun and wind as sugar was too precious to be used for preserving. The dried fruit was stewed in winter. Blueberries and cranberries also grew in abundance, and if carefully handled would keep into the winter.

In lieu of butter, they used marrow fat which was plentiful and easily obtained. When the buffalo were killed and the meat taken off the bones to be dried, the Indian women chopped the buffalo bones and removed the marrow. It made an excellent substitute for butter and a good shortening. A cow was eventually added to the menage and Mrs. McDougall made some butter and cheese, rare treats! Her longing for chickens inspired her son John to buy a few from the Catholic mission at St. Albert, on one of his trips in 1866.

All the cooking was done at the open fireplace and Mrs. McDougall became an adept in the use of the Dutch oven and the crane and pots. Later an oven of stones and clay was built outside, easing the situation a little.

After the Hudson's Bay territory was ceded to the Canadian government in 1870,

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it was easier to get supplies from "outside," such as sugar, bacon, and canned goods. The country was opening up and more people were coming in. As a result more freighting was done. What a relief Mrs. McDougall must have experienced when she had more variety to draw on for her menus. Her resourcefulness had long been severely taxed.

The chatelaine of the mission was always full of life and a gracious hostess. The scantiness of her equipment was not allowed to mar her enjoyment of the company of those who came to the mission at Victoria or the parsonage at Fort Edmonton; nor was it permitted to mar the pleasure of the visitors. Travellers, explorers, prospectors, adventurers, missionaries of all denominations, Hudson's Bay officers, all visited the McDougall home and went away with happy memories of the hospitality extended them, and of their hostess.

The first Christmas spent in the country, that of 1863, was not celebrated so far as the daughters can remember. There was nothing to celebrate with, they say. But next year's celebration made up for past deficiencies. From Fort Edmonton came Christmas

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guests, Richard Hardisty, Malcolm Groat, Donald McDonald, and a Mr. Savage, all Hudson's Bay men who missed the home touch, particularly at this time of the year. Mrs. McDougall cooked a royal feast at her open fireplace—meats, vegetables from their own garden, barley meal cake, and stewed dried fruits. Then she presided over her table with a grace and dignity that reminded her guests of their old homes that seemed so far away as they thought of the Christmas bells. After dinner the younger folk went for a sleighride up the river with dogs and carriages. How Mrs. McDougall spent the afternoon is left to the imagination.

There were many demands upon the time and strength of the gentle Quaker-born woman quite apart from her household duties. Presumably Mr. McDougall was the missionary; so the records of the church show. But he did not work alone. His wife played an equally-important part in Christianizing the Indians and in ministering to the white settlers as they came.

In 1866 and 1867 the young miners commenced to stray in from the Cariboo country, and trappers and prospectors drifted along from the ends of the earth, all sooner or later

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finding their way to the mission and receiving such care as they needed. One man suffering from tuberculosis was brought there to die. He was tenderly nursed by Mrs. McDougall.

There were times when the ills she had to treat were more than repulsive, but she never faltered. In looking after the physical welfare of her patients she did not forget their spiritual needs.

On one occasion a French halfbreed woman whose hands had been treated by the mistress of the mission in an effort to cure some serious sores, remarked to the young daughter who acted as interpreter:

"I hope I shall get better."

"God gives us the medicine and the treatment, but we have to trust in God, and if you trust in God He will help you and will help the medicine to cure you," Mrs. McDougall replied.

But the patient had some doubts at the moment. The Civil War was raging in the United States and this seemed to overshadow all minor struggles.

"Oh, God hasn't time to think of me with that big war going on," she replied.

"God has time to look after anything liv-

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ing which He has created," was the comforting assurance given by the nurse, who no doubt spoke from personal experience.

When the great epidemic of smallpox swept through the west, Mrs. McDougall nursed seven of her own family who were smitten by the plague. She herself was immune having had the disease when a young girl. Two of her own children, Georgiana and Flora, and an adopted daughter, Annie Masterchild, were taken. Fortunately little Nellie was at school in Hamilton so she escaped.

After nursing her own household she found strength, by some miracle, to minister to others. The Hudson's Bay Company now had a fort at Victoria, and the plague did not pause outside the palisades. Mrs. McDougall nursed many sufferers within the fort. At the last she collapsed and for some time her life was despaired of, but her vigorous constitution prevailed and she recovered.

Naturally the shadow of this tragedy hung over the little mission for long after. The following Christmas Colonel Butler spent the evening at the mission house, and of this he wrote: "I spent the evening of

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Christmas Day in the house of the missionary. Two of his daughters sang very sweetly to the music of a small melodeon. Both song and strain were sad—sadder perhaps than the words or music could make them, for the recollection of the two absent ones whose newly-made graves covered with the first snow lay outside, mingled with the hymn and deepened the melancholy of the music.”

In 1866 Mrs. McDougall organized what was the equivalent of the Woman’s Missionary Society.

A number of Scottish half-breed families, outcroppings of the Selkirk settlement, had drifted up from White Horse Plains. These people had no particular purpose in coming to Victoria beyond the fact that they had heard Mr. McDougall speak of the country, and as they were always wandering, they wandered up there. They were a good people and peaceable, and their presence made the little mission party feel stronger. The newcomers made gardens, hunted, and lived happily without thought for the morrow. There were no taxes to pay in those days, no laws except those of the Indian

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tribes and the moral codes of the few white pioneers.

Mrs. McDougall gathered all the woman together for the sewing meeting, half-breeds and Indians meeting on equal footing. Prayers and Scripture reading preceded the sewing. The halfbreed women were good sewers and the Indian women quick to learn. They made garments for themselves and their families. Sometimes they made clothes for the McDougall children, work for which they were paid.

Most of the family garments, however, were made by Mrs. McDougall. The Hudson's Bay Company brought in soft woollen plaid goods from Scotland, French cashmere, and English prints, so there was variety for the children. Mrs. McDougall usually wore black, though sometimes she indulged in a gown of Quaker grey. Her gowns were always relieved by a touch of white at the throat. From the time of her marriage she wore caps fashioned from black lace or tulle and sometimes trimmed with mauve ribbons. These she had sent from England at first, and later from the east.

One hardship which is seldom men-

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tioned in connection with the life of the women pioneers, was that of keeping the home fires burning and keeping the houses warm in winter. Rev. Dr. John McDougall, the writer of the family, describes in vivid phrases the cold experienced on one journey: "The cold was omnipresent. In great chunks, in morsels, in atoms, it was all about us. You could reach out and grasp it. You could shiver in your clothes and feel it. You could almost smell it and see it, and you could hear it plainly enough as with might and force it strained the very earth and made the forest monarchs crack as if they were so many ends to its lash."

While the travellers were fighting this terrible cold in their camp, Mrs. McDougall was struggling to keep her home and her young children reasonably comfortable; and that was only one cold spell of many.

In spite of this unceasing activity, Mrs. McDougall must have had many long, lonely hours. For several years she was the only white woman on the Saskatchewan River. There were some nuns at Lac La Biche in the bush country north, but they stayed close to their mission and Mrs. McDougall

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never saw a white woman's face. But she never complained of loneliness, nor of the difficulties which she met and overcame day by day.

Mr. McDougall was frequently away and his trips were long. When in 1867 he took his daughters to Hamilton to put them in school—the Wesleyan Female College, they left in the early autumn and he did not get back until the following summer. St. Paul, Minnesota, was then the end of steel, so they drove over the prairie, a thousand miles, to take the train. Arriving at Ontario Mr. McDougall became subject to the missionary secretary and travelled through Eastern Canada speaking in the interests of missions and awakening the people for the first time to the knowledge of the great western country. When he returned to the west he brought a party of missionaries and teachers for the Red River district and country lying north-west.

It must have been a lonely day for the mother when she saw the travellers disappear over the prairie, and turned into the quiet house where her three happy girls had romped and chattered, bringing cheer in spite of anxious periods of suspense. It was

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a very great sacrifice for her to let them go so far, but she knew the value of education, and would have made even greater sacrifices if necessary, in order that they should have their schooling. They had been taught the rudiments by their father and the mission teachers, but she realized that they must have more.

Probably the daughters did not then realize the sacrifice their mother was making; that realization came later. But they carried with them a memory of one who was always tranquil, one who never punished them, one whose poise gave them poise when they found themselves in college among a group of Eastern girls who expected to meet semi-wild children dressed in furs and moccasins.

At home when things went wrong, their mother would use one of the few Cree phrases in her vocabulary, "Ah-ke-am," "Don't worry," or "Never mind," and strange to relate the children never took advantage of her attitude, her gentleness. It was not necessary to teach them to respect their parents; respect came naturally. They were, however, deliberately taught to be respectful to the Indians, and this the Indians always appreciated.

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Patience was not the only virtue of this pioneer Quaker woman. The life demanded courage and hers never failed. True, the Cree Indians around the mission were, generally speaking, peaceably inclined toward the whites and gave little trouble ordinarily, but she never knew when hostility would assert itself and they would be at the mercy of savages. The Blackfeet were less trustworthy than the Crees, and gave cause for anxiety.

"Once Mrs. McDougall, my eldest son and two daughters were in the field weeding turnips and not a hundred yards from them, secreted in the long grass, lay eleven Blackfeet," Mr. McDougall wrote in his diary. "They came to pillage and murder, but as they afterward acknowledged, were restrained from firing. At another time they crawled through the barley so as to witness all that was doing in the house, but did no harm. My son and a Christian Cree were crossing the river in a skiff and as they were in the act of hauling the boat up on the bank, a ball passed between them, tearing up earth close to their feet. Many are the hair-breadth experiences of members of this mission, but no blood has been shed."

In later years when the daughter Nellie, Mrs. Leslie Wood, went with her husband, a Hudson's Bay factor, to High River, some

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of the Blackfeet among whom they lived told her a strange story, which bears this out. Unknown to the mission residents, they said, the Blackfeet often went to Victoria with intent to shoot Mr. and Mrs. McDougall as they worked in the garden, and steal the children. "When we were ready to shoot, something about the Day Spirit (Mr. McDougall) always stopped us. It must have been the Great Manitou," they said. They were restrained by a Power they recognized, when they were about to send arrow or bullet on its mission, and they could not draw the bow or pull the triggers of the old flintlock muskets.

The Indians loved the white children and their love was intensified by the fact that the McDougall children were very fair—also were the only white children between the settlements at Fort Garry and those west of the Rockies. When the Indians came openly to the mission, they would take the children in their arms and hug them lovingly, crooning Indian phrases of affection. This was another source of anxiety to the mother, though it was a matter of joy that her children had won their way into the hearts of the Indians. The self-appointed

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nurses were not always clean. But here again the Great Manitou shielded the little flock.

When the hunting season was on, Mrs. McDougall and the children often accompanied the men on the hunt, and as they had to go wherever the buffalo chose to graze, the journeys were often long and fraught with adventure and hardship. Prairie trails were rough, rivers were unbridged, and there was more water in the rivers than now. Currents were stronger also, but rivers were forded in spite of that, when the buffalo grazed beyond. Buffalo meat was the chief food and the missionaries were compelled to forsake their religious duties for the time, to provide for the needs of their families.

When the animals were skinned and cut up, the meat was dried or made into pemmican. Mrs. McDougall had no hand in this except to supervise the cutting. The Indians were not particular about the way they cut the meat, but Mrs. McDougall wanted her supply cut into shapely joints. She realized the importance of having her food look attractive, especially when there was so little variety. It was also necessary to lay in a large supply, for in addition to the family

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requirements; numerous visitors must be provided for, to say nothing of the stray Indians who were always ready for a meal.

Generally speaking the Indians were honest in those days. Only once was the mission house at Victoria broken into, and on that occasion it was Mrs. McDougall who discovered the intruder. The day before, a young Indian sat in the kitchen watching the Indian maid at her work. His head was bare except for an otter skin bound around his forehead. The packet had come in that day—a rare event—and Mr. McDougall was occupied with papers and letters. Mrs. McDougall was upstairs spreading blueberries out to dry on the floor of an empty room. Neither paid any attention to the visitor, a Plains' Cree.

That night Mrs. McDougall was awakened by a sound in her room. She thought it was a cat and got up to catch it. But no cat was there. Instead of finding soft fur she laid her hand on a bare knee! The Indian was nude except for the otterskin on his head and his breech cloth. Drawing her hand up she next encountered the otter skin and knew who it was. Screaming she aroused the family.

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The Indian had entered through a window and wandered all over the house, even tramping through the blueberries upstairs in his search for booty. Indians liked to be paid for their services in clothing, and for this purpose Mrs. McDougall had a large English trunk filled with men's garments, in an upper room. The thief had filled a blanket with clothing and tied it with a belt. He ran into the kitchen when discovered, dropping his spoils as he went. Mr. and Mrs. McDougall followed, also Georgiana and David who were awakened by the noise. Mr. McDougall caught the intruder and told him he was tempted to drop his ministerial cloak for the time and thrash him. However, he contented himself with giving the thief a good shaking.

The Indians, were very fond of turnips and the mission turnip patch was a sore temptation to them, but summer's temptation was as naught compared with that of winter when their diet of meat palled. On one occasion a number of Indians boldly entered the house in daylight. One stood at the door of the sitting-room where Mrs. McDougall was sewing and engaged her attention; another went to the door of the

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dining-room where Georgiana was cutting up something for tea, and stood there watching her. She ordered him away, but he refused to go. Two other Indians were in the cellar stealing turnips and stowing them in their blankets as small boys stow apples in their blouses. Georgiana, then about twelve years old, was quite fearless, for she threw the sharp knife she was working with and it stuck quivering in the doorway beside the Indian's head. She did not know the other men were so near. Mrs. McDougall hastened to see what the trouble was. By this time Georgiana had regained her knife, and as the turnip stealer ran past her she stuck it into his belt cutting the leather and thus allowing the turnips to fall out.

Mrs. McDougall laughed at this incident which might have had serious consequences. However, the Indians did not come back as they feared, to break into the house or frighten them with their weird dances. They had good chiefs who were just and if the whites were in the right and explained things as Mr. McDougall did, they would stand by them. The chiefs had royal blood for many generations, and as in all races, breeding told.

In 1868 Georgiana who had been in school

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in Hamilton for a year, returned home. She was unable to stand the damp and cold of Ontario. Mrs. McDougall then had two daughters and her young son, George, for company when Mr. McDougall and the elder sons were away. Libbie returned from school in the fall of 1870, and Nellie in 1872.

When Nellie came from school, Mr. and Mrs. McDougall were living in Edmonton. They had moved there in 1870. To-day the journey from Victoria (Pakan) to Edmonton can be made in a couple of hours, but not so in 1870 when the McDougalls made their trek. In the journal which Mrs. McDougall kept during her lifetime—a record unfortunately lost after her death—she devoted some space to one of the incidents attending the trip, and this, apparently the only bit of her memoirs left, gives an idea of her calm courage and self-forgetfulness, as well as of the difficulties of travelling.

"We moved from Victoria; my husband and self and two of our neighbors started on our journey to Edmonton. The roads were very bad, the banks of every stream we came to flooded. The two first we crossed without very great difficulty; the third, called Sucker Creek, was raging and the waters rushing in and foaming with swiftest speed. When I first saw it I wondered how we were to cross it and

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turned around to speak to Mr. McDougall. I saw he was preparing to cross by moving the luggage from the buckboard to the cart, and when ready he drove down to the bank of the stream, and at the same time spoke to the boy who was driving the cart to follow. Scarcely had the horse struck the current when he was turned on his side and the horse and buckboard with Mr. McDougall standing on the buckboard seat were carried down the river. There were trees projecting from the bank into the stream on either side and presently all were carried under one of these trees, and horse, buckboard, and driver were tangled up together by the force of the current. This was repeated several times and very soon all disappeared around the point out of my sight. All this happened, as it seemed to me, in a moment.

"I tried to speak, but I could not. I turned to the men, but I saw them running through the bushes along the bank of the river and my first thought was to follow. I was going to do so when the boy with the cart attracted my attention. He had been directed to follow and had just got down to the bank of the stream. The horse had stopped with the water above the shafts and I wanted to see if I could do anything to help him.

"I found that it was impossible to stop, the bank shoving the horse and cart toward the current. We could not possibly back the cart out. I told the boy to sit still and I spoke a few words to the noble animal and he stood perfectly quiet, bracing himself against the current as if he knew both life and property were at stake. In the meantime, I was continually looking to God and praying that my dear

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husband's life might be saved from the watery grave, and while doing so I realized all would be well. I had only to wait, but the time seemed very long before any one could come, and how my heart leaped with joy when I heard his voice calling to me and I ran to him.

"His first words were, 'Let us praise the Lord for the preservation of life.' He had been near the gates of death. Wet and sticky, the reins had become wound around his arm and thus sometimes under the buckboard and sometimes coming to the surface he had been dragged along with the horse and rig; and not until he had succeeded in biting away the reins from his arm was he able to swim for the shore. He said the horse had struck a bar at the foot of the steep bank on the other side of the river and was standing there with just his head and neck out of the water. He said, 'If I can get across now with this other horse I may yet save him.'

"He stopped not to change his wet garments, took off his boots and plunged into the water, and mounting the horse struck into the stream. The horse was a strong, spirited animal, and soon I saw Mr. McDougall and his steed climbing the other bank and disappearing down through the woods. Presently he came back with the other animal and both horse and master looked as if they were ready and fresh for any emergencies that might happen.

"In talking over this circumstance the same evening with old Harry House, one of the neighbors who accompanied us, he said: 'Mr. McDougall's and the animals' lives were saved in answer to prayer. Madame you must call to mind the prayer

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that was offered by Mr. McDougall this very morning before we started on our way. In the course of his prayer he asked God to bless us on our journey and asked Him that the lives of both men and animals entrusted to him might be precious in His sight, and so it was.' Tears of joy were streaming down the old man's cheeks as he thus spoke to me of the day's experience."

This incident, quoted from Dr. John McDougall's biography of his father, is an illustration of the dangers that attended travelling in those days. No mention is made of how Mrs. McDougall crossed the river. Evidently she made no record of her experience. Making a new home was on her mind.

Mr. McDougall built the first Methodist church in Edmonton, in 1871, and the parsonage in 1872. The church is still standing—altered it is true—on Alberta College campus. These were the first buildings outside the fort. The parsonage overlooked the Saskatchewan River, and the trees Mrs. McDougall planted in front of it are still living. Mrs. McDougall and Libbie cooked for the men who held a bee to raise the framework of the parsonage.

Mrs. McDougall's life was a little easier

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now, though still isolated. There were no white women in the country except those of her own family and the nuns at St. Albert, eight miles distant, and at Lac La Biche, two hundred miles away. In 1866 her daughter, Eliza, had married Mr. Richard Hardisty, a factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and still later a Senator. The Hardistys were then living temporarily in bachelor's quarters at the fort awaiting the departure of Chief Factor Christie. When he went away they moved into Rowan's Folly, the big house inside the fort.

Mrs. McDougall was often alone. Her daughter, Libbie, became the bride of Mr. Harrison Young in 1873, and the following year Nellie, the youngest daughter, married Mr. W. Leslie Wood. Both bridegrooms were in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, their positions equivalent to that of factor. Mr. McDougall still travelled around a great deal, even to Ontario and England on lecture tours.

While her husband was abroad Mrs. McDougall remained in Ontario. This was her first visit since coming west fourteen years before. On his way back, Mr. McDougall lectured again in Eastern Can-

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ada, and *en route* home visited Indian settlements on behalf of the federal government, giving the Indians presents and paving the way for the treaties which were made between them and the Government later.

Mr. and Mrs. McDougall returned from Eastern Canada in the fall of 1875 and stayed at Morley, west of Calgary. Mr. McDougall had developed heart trouble and it was his intention to rest there. He was only expected to preach at the Royal North West Mounted Police barracks at The Elbow (Calgary) every other Sunday.

Mrs. McDougall was visiting her daughter, Mrs. Leslie Wood, at High River, when tragedy next came to her. She and Mrs. Wood had planned to drive to The Elbow on Saturday to meet Mr. McDougall who would preach there on Sunday. On Saturday a blizzard came up and the horses refused to go against the storm on the open prairie. The drivers had to turn back. On Sunday morning Mrs. Wood felt some urge to take the journey though they never made a practice of travelling on Sunday.

"Mother, we will have to go to-day," she said. "There is nothing to keep us here—no service. Father will expect us and there

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can be no sin in driving eighteen miles on Sunday."

Mrs. McDougall hesitated, troubled over the thought of breaking a life-long habit. "Oh, Nellie, I wouldn't like to start on Sunday," she replied.

But Mrs. Wood persisted and in the end Mr. Wood joined in the discussion and persuaded the mother to go. They reached The Elbow about seven o'clock in the evening.

A week before Mr. McDougall had been lost on the prairie, and when the women arrived, a party of men, including Colonel MacLeod, were getting off their horses. They had been searching the prairie for him.

"To my surprise," says Mrs. Wood in speaking of this tragedy, "my brother John came to help me out of the sleigh instead of going first to mother. 'I expected to see father,' I remarked to him. 'Are all well at Morley?'"

"All are well that are there," he replied.

Mrs. Wood noticed Mr. and Mrs. Bunn, their host and hostess, whispering to her brothers and they all entered the house, Mrs. McDougall taking no notice of the breach of etiquette. It had been hastily decided that

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she should not be told of the disaster until after supper. The meal was nearly concluded when the plan was upset. Without warning Father Scullon, the Roman Catholic missionary, entered the room. He did not observe the women who were sitting with their backs to the door, and addressed himself to the sons.

"I have come to condole with you on your great calamity," he said.

John left the table.

"What calamity has come upon us, John?" Mrs. McDougall enquired.

It was David who answered. "Well, mother, you may as well know the worst. We do not know where father is. We have not been able to find him for seven days."

In those days missionaries worked like other men. Mr. McDougall was out with his son, John, and his hunting party, and as they were returning to camp in the evening he decided to ride ahead in order to give directions about the supper, and otherwise arrange for the coming of the men. On his way he was seized with a heart attack and lay down on the prairie to die. The blizzard covered him with snow and it was not until about fourteen days later that he was found.

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A chinook melted the snow and a half-breed boy found him where he had lain down, a smile on his face and his busy hands folded on his breast.

After Mr. McDougall's death, Mrs. McDougall stayed for a full year at Morley, then went to Cobourg, Ontario, to place her son, George, in school. When his schooling was completed they returned to Morley and Mrs. McDougall took up a homestead so that George could have a ranch. She was one of the first women homesteaders in what is now the province of Alberta. After building her house and settling there it seemed as though life might run peacefully for her. But still tragedy stalked her family, and another long waiting ended in sorrow.

George McDougall, then eighteen years of age, and Tommie McKenzie, Mrs. David McDougall's brother, went to Helena, Montana, to buy cattle for themselves, David McDougall, and Senator Cochrane. The boys could not get back until spring because of the snow in the mountain ranges. In April, when they were looking forward to homing, George developed pneumonia and died. After the funeral, Tommie started home. With his cowboys and part of his

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herd he got over one of the difficult mountain streams. Some of the cattle would not ford the stream. Tommie rode back to see what the trouble was, and that was the last seen of him. It was presumed that he was drowned, but this was never definitely known. A cowboy rode back to Benton and telegraphed his father who lived in Burnside, near Portage la Prairie, but made no mention of George's death. Mr. McKenzie came up to join in the search, but found no trace of his son.

In the meantime the relatives at Morley were expecting the boys back. The cowboys loitered by the way, and at last, with a handful of cattle, reached Morley in October. Then did Mrs. McDougall learn that her youngest son was gone, and her daughter-in-law, Mrs. David McDougall, that death had claimed her brother.

The west had taken heavy toll of the gentle Quaker woman, and in tragic fashion—two daughters, Georgiana and Flora victims of smallpox, her husband dying alone on the prairie, and her son taken in a distant country.

For the remainder of her life Mrs. McDougall made her home at Morley, only

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going east occasionally. A granddaughter lived with her. Year in year out she tended her household, nursed the sick, mothered all. Settlers were coming to the country and opening up ranches. The women particularly felt the isolation of their lives keenly, and often became despondent. Something seemed to warn Mrs. McDougall of their need and she would drive across the prairie to see them and brighten them up. Perhaps she would stay a night and part of the next day, or even longer. Ranchers and their wives soon learned to love their gentle visitor who had the gift of saying the right word at the right moment. This gift of understanding and of imparting courage made warm friends for her among all she met.

She loved children and often made parties for the little folks from the orphanage at Morley—now a party for the boys, now for the girls, and the white children around invited to share the festivity. The Indian children were well behaved, in fact they behaved better than the whites. If unspoiled the Indians had a reverence for the white people, especially for old people, and the Indians loved Mrs. McDougall wherever she lived.

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In March, 1904, her last illness came, and even her latter hours were hours of waiting—waiting for her daughters, Mrs. Young and Mrs. Wood to come from Edmonton. Mrs. Hardisty was in Toronto beyond reach. There was no Sunday passenger train from Edmonton, only an engine and a caboose went out and the officials would not allow the women to ride in the caboose. On Monday they got to Calgary and found a telegram urging them to hasten on to Morley by a freight train which was the first train going out. But a strike was on and the strikers would not allow them to do so. The passenger train which was due at two a.m. did not arrive until seven o'clock in the morning. Their mother's casket went out on the same train. Tired and unable to wait longer, Mrs. McDougall had passed out at nine o'clock on Monday evening.

Her youngest sister, Mrs. William Greer, of Calgary, was with her in her last illness, and in their conversation the years were forgotten and the sisters reverted to the Quaker speech of their childhood—the gentle "Thee's" and "Thou's" unspoken for many long years.

A terrible blizzard raged around Morley

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during the last days of Mrs. McDougall's life, and on the day of her funeral her body was conveyed to the church on a bobsleigh. Six white men were the pallbearers. The Indians were waiting at the church and when the pallbearers started to carry the casket into the church, six Indian chiefs of the Mountain Stony tribe quietly took it from their hands and carried it themselves.

Mrs. McDougall was eighty-four years old when she passed on, and few women leave such a record of quiet service and self sacrifice, hitherto unchronicled. A study of her portrait gives one an impression of the strength of character which carried her through hardships and difficulties, through sorrows multiplied, and kept her sweet and joyous. It is a serene face out of which grey eyes regard life calmly. Shining brown hair is crowned by the cap she always wore. The harsh winds and hot suns of the prairies failed to mar her fresh English complexion, and even in her old age when her hair was white she had a good color. Though she lived for those around her, there was one time in which she forgot her family—while conducting family worship in her latter years. At such times, her daughter says,

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she forgot the presence of all and talked with God.

Of her family of nine, only two are left, Mrs. Harrison Young who resides at Peace River, and Mrs. Leslie Wood in Edmonton. Her eldest daughter, Mrs. Richard Hardisty, died in Bermuda in 1929. Her eldest son, the Rev. Dr. John McDougall, also a pioneer missionary, passed on in 1917, and the second son, David McDougall, trader and rancher, died in 1928. All played important parts in the upbuilding of Western Canada, and their names are honored in the history of the country—but it was the gentle mother who played the most important rôle of all.